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SUBJECT: UNSC CONSULTATIONS: LIBERIA AND COTE D'IVOIRE

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11. (U) USUN may draw on the points in paragraph 3 for the June 25 Security Council consultations. We understand that U/SYG LeRoy will brief on his recent visits to both Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire, so have included points on both countries.

12. (U) The Secretary-General's June 10 report on Liberia S/2009/299 includes a summary of the findings of the Technical Assistance Mission (TAM) that visited Liberia from April 26 to May 6, and endorses those recommendations. The TAM concluded that, given the current security situation, the continuing but still limited progress in developing Liberian security institutions, and the likely need for UN support for the 2011 Liberian elections, there could be some small adjustments to the UNMIL drawdown plan. Specifically, the TAM recommended moving up to mid-2010 the original December 2010 target date for drawing down UNMIL's military strength to 7,952 troops in Liberia and 250 troops in Sierra Leone (total of 8,202). The TAM also recommended reducing the number of vehicles and aircraft, as well as further consolidation of UNMIL locations. The TAM recommended maintaining police at the current levels. The report took into account a possible need for UNMIL to temporarily reinforce UNOCI (with one military company and four helicopters) a month before the Ivorian elections, currently scheduled for November 29, 2009, but notes that once UNMIL has completed the third phase of its drawdown, in May 2010, it will not have sufficient capacity to reinforce UNOCI (that is, if the Ivorian elections are postponed again, it may not be possible for UNMIL to provide additional capacity). The U.S. supports the Secretary-General's recommendations. A joint Department of Political Affairs/UN Development Program electoral needs assessment went to Liberia in May; the Secretary-General will include recommendations on the UN's (including UNMIL's) role in the 2011 elections in his mid-August report. UNMIL's current mandate will expire on September 30, 2009.

13. (U) Begin points:

-- We thank U/SYG LeRoy for his briefing on his recent visit to Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire.

-- The U.S. continues to work in close cooperation with the UN and the Government of Liberia in developing good governance and a solidly-based Liberian security architecture which will be sustainable over the long term.

-- We welcome the Secretary-General's recommendations, which represent a well-informed and thorough review of the situation on the ground by the Technical Assessment Mission, as well as by SRSF Loej and her military, political and civilian advisors.

-- They call for a very slight acceleration in the pace of

phase three of UNMIL's drawdown beyond what the Council approved last September, moving up the end date by six months, but clearly endorse the repeated findings of the UN's experts that we should not take precipitous steps to draw down more rapidly than is prudent. As we have said before, crises in Liberia have in the past affected the entire sub-region, and the United States believes that we should take the long view, rather than risking the work of years by too hasty a departure.

-- We also look forward to his recommendations in his next report on the appropriate role for the UN in the 2011 Liberian elections.

-- We wish to thank the Panel of Experts for its midterm report recommending several options to further strengthen the efficacy of the sanctions regime. The United States is exploring ways we can be responsive to President Sirleaf's request for support building the GOL's ability to carry out its assets freeze obligations.

-- The United States commends the invaluable assistance that UNMIL is providing to the Government of Liberia in re-establishing proper administration of its natural resources and authority in mining and forestry areas, and believes that this help is still needed.

-- In that regard, we welcome the passage by the Liberian legislature of the "Act Establishing the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative."

-- We also wish to express our support for continued cooperation and collaboration between the Liberia Panel of Experts and the Cote d'Ivoire Sanctions Committee's Group of Experts.

-- As the Liberia Panel,s recommended, we encourage the Government of Liberia to continue to strengthen its internal controls on diamond mining and trading and to enhance collaboration with the Kimberley Process and neighboring countries, to ensure that diamonds from Cote d'Ivoire do not enter Liberia for subsequent export as Liberian diamonds in contravention of the Ivorian diamond ban.

-- The United States continues to encourage the Ivorian parties to carry out their commitments, in order to hold free, fair, transparent and inclusive elections as scheduled on November 29. No one can be more weary than the Ivorian people of the repeated delays and postponements. We urge all concerned to act in the common interest of their country and take the steps necessary for Cote d'Ivoire to return to political stability and prosperity.

-- We thank the men and women of UNMIL and UNOCI for their continuing dedication and sacrifice.

End points.  
CLINTON